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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WINDHOEK 000441

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [WA](#)  
SUBJECT: NAMIBIANS GROW TIRED OF ELECTION DELAYS

REF: A. WINDHOEK 433  
[1](#)B. WINDHOEK 401  
[1](#)C. WINDHOEK 377

Classified By: Ambassador Dennise Mathieu for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. As vote tabulation enters its sixth day, Namibians are asking when the final results from the November 27 and 28 general election will be announced. The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) has confirmed results from 47 of 107 constituencies. Those figures show the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) party enjoying a comfortable lead in both the contest for National Assembly seats and that for the presidency. The ECN is facing harsh criticism for the delay, and opposition parties are muttering that legal action may be necessary if rumors of inappropriate recounts and mistakes prove true. End summary.

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Official Results  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) As of December 3, the ECN has posted final results for 47 of Namibia's 107 constituencies. Of the approximately 327,700 votes that have been counted and verified, SWAPO maintains a commanding lead with 77 percent of those votes. The young Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) is performing below expectations (ref A) with just over nine percent of the vote so far. The rest of the 12 opposition parties are trailing with a combined 14 percent of the vote. The ECN has confirmed at least some results from all but one of Namibia's 13 regions (Otjozondjupa). Of those, SWAPO's strongest performance is in its traditional base in the northern region of Omusati (97.3 percent of the vote). Its weakest performance is in Omaheke (36.8 percent of the vote), where, notably, it still has won more votes than any other single party. The RDP's best results are coming from the Hardap and Karas regions in the south, where it has garnered approximately 28 percent of the vote in the constituencies that have reported. The UDF party, which draws most of its support from the Damara ethnic group, thus far is outpacing SWAPO in its stronghold of Kunene (43.4 percent), and the Herero-based NUDO party is doing well in its old stomping ground of Omaheke (32.6 percent).

[1](#)3. (C) Missing from the list of top contenders is the current official opposition party (that with the most opposition seats in the National Assembly), the Congress of Democrats (COD). That the COD is performing poorly (.65 percent) comes as no shock. The party suffered a well-publicized schism in 2009, which landed the COD in court and nearly bankrupted its coffers (ref B). Nevertheless, COD Spokesman Natji Tjirera told Poloff he was "devastated" by just how bad the results are. "We will be lucky to get even one seat," he admitted.

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More Ire for the ECN  
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[1](#)4. (SBU) The ECN, which was heavily criticized during the

pre-election phase and during the polling for providing inconsistent information and bungling procedures, is bearing the blame for the delays in the counting and announcement of results (ref C). Namibians are accustomed to waiting for election results; in recent national elections, the ECN has released final results after four or five days. However, with numbers still trickling in on Day 6, some are speculating that the slow pace is a sign of trouble. On December 2, the electoral body made a radio appeal to its staff, imploring them to report to the head office, while a team from headquarters urgently flew to four northern regions to help verify and recount ballots. The ECN held a briefing with political parties shortly thereafter to explain the situation. DTA Member of Parliament McHenry Venaani told the press the opposition was unhappy with the news. He noted that the Electoral Amendment Act does not provide many details on how the verification process should be carried out. According to Venaani's interpretation, once the verification process is completed, verification and counting should not be repeated. "Reopening ballot boxes and taking out ballot papers; that is not good," he said. (Note: ECN Deputy Director of Operations Theo Mujoro told Poloff that ballots would be counted only once-- at the polling stations immediately following the closing of the polls-- and not recounted at verification centers or at the ECN's results center. End note.)

15. (U) The RDP has also complained about discrepancies in the verification process. On December 2, RDP Director of Administration Libolly Haufiku expressed his party's outrage that the ECN had not adequately trained its staff in counting and verification procedures. Moreover, he was worried that

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the numbers posted outside the polling stations and reported by RDP party agents who witnessed the initial counts on November 28 and 29, in some instances did not match the ECN's official results. He cited several cases, among them a constituency in the Caprivi region, where SWAPO first had 4000 votes but only 2000 after a recount. "How many more such mistakes have been made? This is a mess." Haufiku told the press.

16. (C) The press reports that six opposition parties have joined forces to record irregularities and discrepancies, which they plan to forward to their attorneys. RDP insider Toiva Nambinga told Poloff on December 2 that his party was seriously considering challenging the ECN in court.

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Turnout

17. (C) The ECN has not released a final figure of the number of voters who participated in the elections. In recent months, the ECN had announced several different numbers of registered voters (ref C). On December 1, Mujoro told Poloff that there were most likely 1.18 million eligible voters, and he estimated that somewhere between 700,000 and 800,000 Namibians voted on November 27 and 28.

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Conclusion

18. (C) The delays in announcing the results are troubling, but thus far there is no concrete evidence pointing to electoral fraud. Most likely, this is a case of ineptitude, rather than widespread rigging. It was clear long before voting day that the opposition was prepared to mount legal challenges. Many of the parties have been itching for a fight with the ECN for months, and the election body has done little to inspire confidence in the aftermath of the vote. Even with less than half of the returns confirmed, it seems certain that SWAPO's presidential candidate, incumbent President Hifikepunye Pohamba, will be re-elected and likely

that SWAPO will retain its two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, which gives it the power to amend the constitution.

MATHIEU